federal register

Tuesday
January 8, 1980

Part VI

Interagency Committee on Metric Policy

Notification of "Metric Conversion Policy for Federal Agencies" and "Federal Agency Guidelines for Implementation of Metric Conversion Policy"

INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON METRIC POLICY

Federal Metric Policy and Guidelines; Notification of "Metric Conversion Policy for Federal Agencies" and "Federal Agency Guidelines for Implementation of Metric Conversion Policy"

The Federal Interagency Committee on Metric Policy (ICMP) is publishing This Notice to alert interested parties to the existence of the Metric Conversion Policy for Federal Agencies and the accompanying Federal Agency Guidelines for Implementation of Metric Conversion Policy. These two documents were developed by the ICMP to provide guidance to Federal agencies in their metrication activities.

Comments on these domcments are welcomed and should be addressed to Howard B. Ellsworth, Chairman, Metrication Operating Committee of the ICMP.

Howard B. Ellsworth, DUSD (R&E) AP, Department of Defense, Room 2A318, Pentagon, Washington, D.C. 20310 (202) 695–7915.

The text of the two documents follows:

Metric Conversion Policy For Federal Agencies

June 11, 1979.

Purpose

The purpose is to state for Federal agencies a policy for the increasing use of the metric system within the Federal government. The metric system, for the purpose of this document, means the International System of Units as established by the General Conference on Weights and Measures in 1960 and as interpreted or modified for the United States by the Secretary of Commerce.

Background

On July 28, 1866, the United States adopted the *Use of the Metric System of Weights and Measures Act of 1866* (14 Stat. 339), which legalized the use of the metric system throughout the United States. On May 20, 1875, the United States signed the *Treaty of the Meter* (20 Stat. 709), which provided for an International Bureau of Weights and Measures, an International Committee of Weights and Measures, and for a General Conference on Weights and Measures. In recognition of the fact that the International System (SI), as defined by the General Conferences on Weights and Measures since 1960, has not become the uniform internationally accepted system for weights and measures, many sectors of the United States have already started metrication. On December 23, 1975, the President signed the *Metric Conversion Act of 1975* (Public Law 94–168; 15 USC 205a), which (1) declared that the policy of the United States shall be to coordinate and plan the increasing use of the metric system in the United States, and (2) established the U.S. Metric Board to coordinate the voluntary conversion to the metric system.

Policy Statement

Federal agencies shall conduct their metrication activities in a coordinated manner consistent with the objectives of the Metric Conversion Act and compatible with metric conversion trends in the nation. (Section 3 of the Act declares that the policy of the United States shall be to coordinate and plan the increasing use of the metric system in the United States.) Federal agencies shall encourage and support an environment which facilities metrication. Each Federal agency shall develop plans, allocate sufficient resources, and take actions to:

1. Actively undertake coordination and planning for metric conversion, taking into account the interests, views and conversion plans of other Federal agencies, states and affected parties in the private sector.
2. Identify the areas where metrication is dependent upon the agency's initiative and take appropriate action.
3. Identify the areas where metrication is dependent upon initiatives outside the agency which impact the agency and take appropriate action.
4. Maximize benefits and minimize costs in areas impacted by the agency's program.
5. Facilitate public understanding of, and participation in, metrication activities in agency programs.
6. Identify problems associated with metrication activities in areas impacted by the agency's programs, and appropriately assist in the resolution of these problems.

Each agency shall: 1. Establish the necessary guidelines and structure to adequately carry out the policy.

2. Designate a key executive with the authority to establish intra-agency policies for metrication and to represent and speak for the agency in interagency forums.

3. Identify on a continuing basis measurement-sensitive policies and procedures for which it is responsible, and prepare new or revised regulations, standards, specifications, procurement policies, and, if appropriate, legislative proposals, to remove barriers to metric conversion.

Federal Agency Guidelines for Implementation of Metric Conversion Policy

October 25, 1979.

Purpose

These guidelines are to be used to support and implement the metric conversion policy for agencies of the Federal Government. The intent is to clarify the basic Federal policy and assist in the development and coordination of cost-effective metrication activities and programs. The metric system, for the purpose of this document, means the International System of Units as established by the General Conference of Weights and Measures in 1960 and as interpreted or modified for the United States by the Secretary of Commerce.

1. Each agency shall develop a capability to identify and to implement metric conversion initiatives including the associated time frames for their initiation and completion. This shall include the capability for coordination with other agencies.

2. The allocation of agency resources for metric implementation should be accepted as part of the ongoing activities of the agency.

3. Each agency shall immediately establish practices that raise its employees' awareness and understanding of the change to the metric system.

4. Each agency shall develop education and training plans, as applicable, in metric usage.

5. Each agency shall adopt metric units and practices unless there are substantial reasons against such actions. Justification for not adopting such metric usage shall be reviewed periodically.

6. When the private sector has a capability to provide metric products or services at reasonable cost, the agency will, at the earliest possible time, give priority to the acquisition and use of such metric products or services to the maximum extent permitted by existing law and policy. Small business capability will be considered in development of agency policies and procedures as required by Federal law.

7. Each agency's use of the metric system in its activities and products shall be consistent with statutory, operational, economic, technical, and safety considerations. Each agency shall include such considerations as an integral part of its metrication activities.

8. Each agency, recognizing the long term nature of the public acceptance process, shall immediately begin to develop and implement plans for involving, informing and educating the various publics affected by the specific metication activities under way in the agency's programs. Included shall be:

a. Infomation on upcoming metrication.
b. The schedule of such conversions.
c. The justification of the conversions.
d. Provision for a mechanism to assure public participation and comment.
e. Explanation of the applicable metric units and practices.
f. The progress of conversion.

9. Each agency shall provide representatives, advisors, and/or participants to metrication groups in the private sector as appropriate in order to monitor and/or coordinate agency activities with private sector planning.

10. Each agency shall recognize the Interagency Committee on Metric Policy (ICMP) as the policy-coordinating group for the Federal Government, and that the ICMP representatives are expected to be able to speak for their respective agencies on metric policy matters.

11. Each agency shall designate an Agency Metric Coordinator, who shall serve as a member of the Metrication Operating Committee (MOC). The agency shall also appoint, as appropriate, agency individuals to actively participate in the activities of the various MOC subcommittees.

Dated: December 28, 1979.

Howard B. Ellsworth,

Chairman, Metrication Operating Committee of the ICMP.

[FR Doc. 80-597 Filed 1-7-80; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6325-04-M